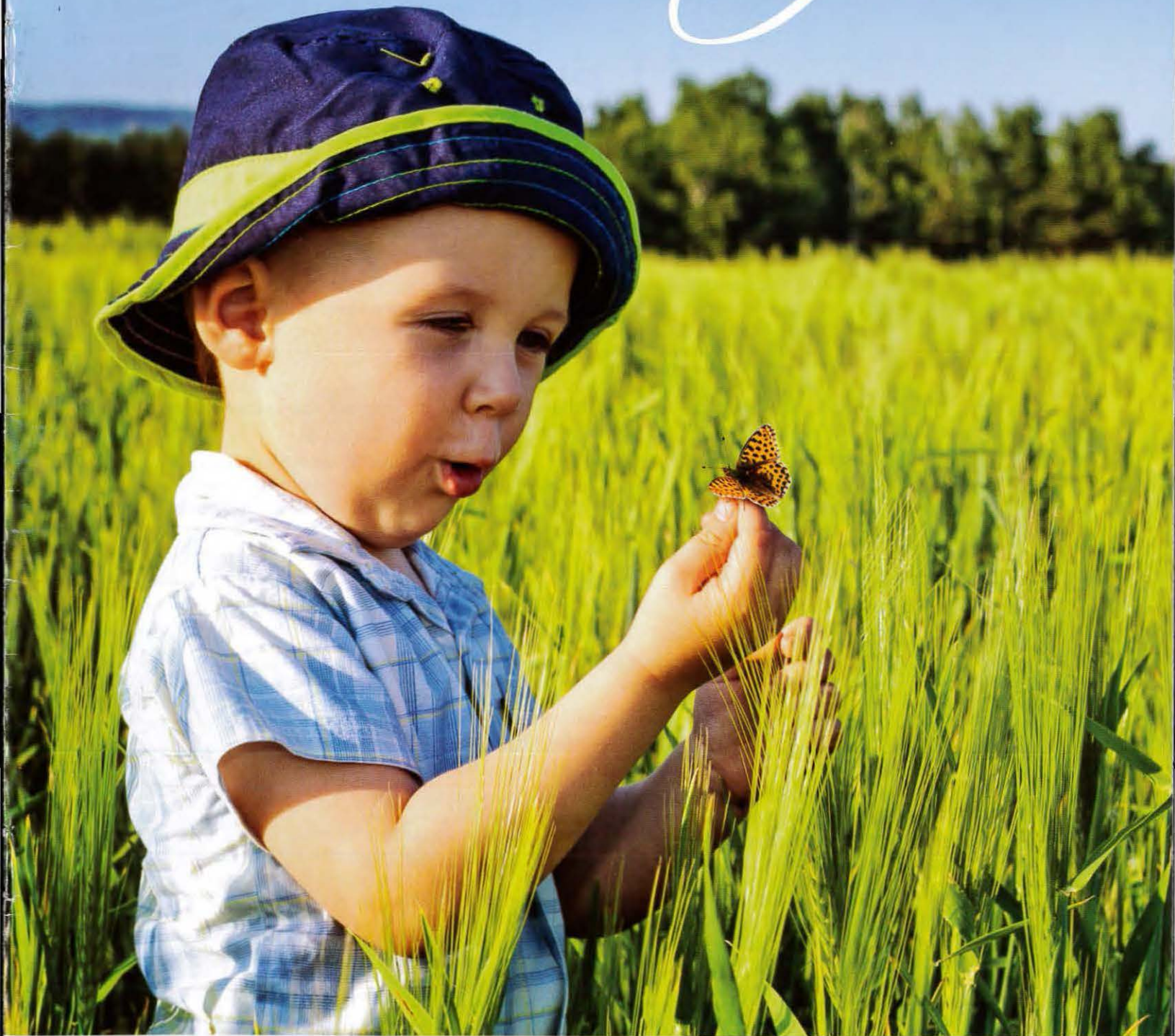


Spring 2012

healthy horizons

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New Leadership at the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance

It is with great pleasure that Jim Edwards, President/CEO of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance, announces two new appointments to his leadership team. Megan Scherer, MBA, has been named Chief Administrative Officer of the Hazleton Health & Wellness Center.

Megan, a committed member of the Alliance family since 2006, has served in various capacities during her tenure here, most recently as Assistant Administrator of the Health & Wellness Center. During this time, Megan served under the tutelage of Lynne Miller who recently retired as the Chief Administrative Officer.

In her new role as Chief Administrative Officer, Megan, along with her leadership team, will oversee the operations of all of the hospital-based outpatient services at the Hazleton Health & Wellness Center.

"I look forward to this great opportunity, and I'm humbled by the support from our hospital network and the local community," said Megan. "I've been fortunate to be mentored by numerous civic and organizational leaders. I'm excited to join the senior management team so that we can collaboratively continue to identify innovative and sustainable ways to move our organization to the next level with the ultimate goal of providing high quality, customer-focused healthcare to our community."



Jill Lewis was recently named Executive Director of Alliance Medical Group, a multi-specialty healthcare provider network of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance.

Jill has been in the healthcare industry for the past 14 years, primarily in physician practice management. Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, she earned a bachelors degree in management, as well as an MBA from Georgia State College and University.

A consultant with the Coker Group in Atlanta—Jill's experience is in physician practice management, billing office and revenue cycle assessments, as well as physician compensation plans, redesign, and practice mergers. Her work crosses all specialties, including urology, obstetrics & gynecology, orthopedic surgery, primary care, radiation oncology, and cardiology.

Most recently, Jill served as the CEO of Urology Austin for three years, located in Austin, Texas. This successful merger included four established urology groups with 19 physicians. She was instrumental in the implementation of an in-house pathology lab, a radiation center, as well as the recruitment and hiring of four new physicians to the merged group. Her vast experience in the healthcare industry makes her an important asset to the future growth and development of Alliance Medical Group.

Jill recently relocated from her home in Austin, Texas, to Hazleton. "I am excited for the future of the Alliance Medical Group and grateful for the opportunity to be a part of that future, serving our providers, our employees, and our community," said Jill. □





Like Us on Facebook!

We're excited to announce the creation of a new Greater Hazleton Health Alliance Facebook page, which will enable us to interact and communicate better with the communities we serve. Through this social networking page, we'll be able to publicize all Alliance-related information to you in one location. This includes new service lines, awards, and health information that pertains to Hazleton General Hospital, the Hazleton Health & Wellness Center, and Alliance Medical Group. Health and wellness tips and information that you can use will also be provided.

But that's not all... Soon we'll be launching a Facebook campaign that includes a vibrant welcome page, prizes for those who follow us, and fun games to quiz your knowledge of health-related topics.

Scan the smart phone QR code or search "Greater Hazleton Health Alliance" on Facebook. □



Did an Article Impact You... Tell Us About It!

As a not-for-profit healthcare organization, our primary goal is to serve the many needs of our diverse community through high quality healthcare services and convenient access to many informative health resources. One of the many ways we provide community education is through Healthy Horizons, our award-winning quarterly publication that explores a multitude of interesting health topics. We're interested to hear your feedback. Did an article impact you in a positive way? Tell us about it!

E-mail: community@ghha.org or post to our Greater Hazleton Health Alliance Facebook page. □

Message from the President/CEO



Welcome to the spring issue of Healthy Horizons, a publication of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance. We have plenty of interesting reading material for you to enjoy in this issue, such as the introduction of new healthcare providers, diabetic and endocrinology education, quality awards, new services, and much more.

We are especially proud to announce that Hazleton General Hospital is the proud recipient of the HealthGrades Pulmonary Care Excellence Award™. We're honored that HealthGrades named Hazleton General Hospital among the nation's Best 100 Hospitals in Pulmonary Care.

Recently, our organization wished Lynne Miller a happy and healthy retirement. During her time as Chief Administrative Officer of the Hazleton Health & Wellness Center, she was instrumental in the development of the outpatient center, its service lines, and staff leadership. She also willingly accepted the additional responsibility of serving as a leader for Alliance Medical Group, the Alliance's multi-specialty healthcare group. We will miss our friend and co-worker and wish her well in her retirement. I am confident that through Megan Scherer and Jill Lewis' leadership we will continue to provide outstanding services for the community.

As always, I thank you for supporting your local community hospital, and we look forward to serving any of your future healthcare needs. Enjoy the spring season!

Jim Edwards,

Jim Edwards
President/CEO

Filling a Community Need

Diabetes, Endocrinology & Metabolic Care

The Greater Hazleton Health Alliance is pleased to welcome Ayse K. Mohyuddin, MD, to the community. Dr. Mohyuddin specializes in endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolism.

"We identified a growing need for this specialty, particularly with the prevalence of diabetes in our community, and recruited a highly-qualified specialist to meet those needs," said Jim Edwards, President/CEO of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance. "At one time, you had to travel out of town for these specialty services, but now we're happy to bring these services to you."

Dr. Mohyuddin believes this is a wonderful opportunity. "It's a privilege to contribute and be a part of this organization, which promotes a team-approach to care and a family-like environment."

Did you know that of the 25 million people suffering from diabetes in the United States, only an approximate 18.8 million are diagnosed? This equates to seven million adults and children foregoing proper treatment and diabetes management. In fact, it's estimated that by the year 2050, nearly 33 percent of the population will be diabetic.

Dr. Mohyuddin believes that diabetes treatment and management must go beyond identifying the problem. Rather, a healthcare team must search deeper to reveal the source of the problem, helping patients make behavioral modifications where necessary and providing education each and every step of the way.

"One of my goals as part of Alliance Medical Group is to increase awareness in the community about endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolic disorders. I want to educate the public about prevention, treatment, the importance

of healthier lifestyles and physician follow-ups, daily exercise and activities, weight maintenance, and more," said Dr. Mohyuddin.

Similarly, endocrinology concerns, such as thyroid disease, are climbing the charts at an alarming rate. A staggering 200 million people worldwide and 27 million in the United States suffer from thyroid gland disorders. Even more astonishing, nearly half are undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.

"Teamwork, education across the continuum of care at the Alliance, prevention, and proper follow-up are key components to getting you healthy and helping you stay that way."

- Dr. Mohyuddin

It's reassuring to know the specialty services you need are right here at the Alliance, close to home. Dr. Mohyuddin sees patients who are 18 years of age and older. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Mohyuddin, call 570.501.6460.

Dr. Mohyuddin received her Doctor of Medicine degree from the East Carolina University School of Medicine, Greenville, North Carolina, and completed her residency at Yale-New Haven Hospital, which is an affiliated program at the Hospital of St. Raphael, New Haven, Connecticut. Dr. Mohyuddin completed a fellowship in Endocrinology at New York University Medical Center. She is a member of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists and the Endocrine Society. □



Simply Meant to Be

Upon entering the physician assistant (PA) program, there was no doubt in Shelley Sassaman's mind that she would return to the town where she grew up to practice medicine. "The goal always was to return to Hometown, Pennsylvania so that I could provide medical services for my neighbors. It's an opportunity for me to care for the community I grew up in and give back for all they've given to me," said Sassaman, PA, CDE.

Sassaman is able to use her professional skill set to meet the family practice needs of the Hometown area. In particular, Sassaman is a certified diabetic educator (CDE), a specialty that is near and dear to her heart. Diagnosed at a young age, Sassaman suffers with the disease herself and, therefore, is able to relate to her patients' daily struggles.

"More than half of my patients are diabetic. My primary goal is to improve the lives of diabetics in this area. I know all too well that there are days where we fall off the wagon. There are going to be bad days. I believe God gave me diabetes for a reason... so that I could come back here and use my skills to help my patients. I want people to understand that diabetics don't have to experience poor outcomes with the diagnosis. With proper treatment, maintenance, and patient compliance, diabetics can lead a very normal life," said Sassaman.

Deciding to join the Alliance Medical Group was an easy decision for Sassaman. "I was immensely impressed with the professionalism and progressivism of the Alliance organization, but also the general kindness of everyone. I wanted to be part of this family-like atmosphere," said Sassaman. □



Shelley Sassaman,
PA-C, CDE
Family Practice

Alliance Medical Group,
231 Claremont Avenue (Rt. 309)
Hometown (Tamaqua), PA 18252
P: 570.225.7211



A Diabetic's To Do List

Watch your diet and meet with a dietitian for guidance of the do's and don'ts. Diabetics can enjoy a variety of food choices, as long as it is figured into their overall meal/carbohydrate plan.

- ☒ **Check your blood sugar regularly.** A normal blood sugar is 60-120mg/dl. Of course, each patient will have different control goals, but the key is to know your goal numbers and discuss them with your healthcare provider.
- ☒ **Exercise regularly,** even if it's as simple as a short walk or going up and down the stairs 2-3 times. Simple activities such as staying active during a television commercial can make a difference. (However, a walk to the refrigerator doesn't count.)
- ☒ **Schedule an eye doctor appointment** at least once per year to monitor for diabetic retinopathy. Most cases of retinopathy can be controlled if treated early and vision can be preserved.
- ☒ **Make an annual podiatry appointment** and conduct daily inspections of your feet (look for sores). Diabetics may suffer from neuropathy, which can decrease feeling in the feet. Diabetic foot sores can worsen quickly. Catching problems early can prevent months of treatment to heal problems.
- ☒ **Talk with your doctor about cholesterol and lipid profile blood work,** as well as thyroid screening and urinalysis. These tests can help prevent/determine heart disease or kidney disease.
- ☒ **Monitor yourself for depression** and know the warning signs. Diabetics are 50 percent more likely to suffer from depression than those without diabetes. Getting treatment can help prevent uncontrolled sugars secondary to stress eating.
- ☒ **Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol** because this causes increased small vessel disease, which, in turn, causes increased risk of heart attack and stroke.
- ☒ **Take your medications as prescribed** and at the same times daily. Having a daily routine definitely helps to control blood sugars.



Modern Renovations to Patient Floors

Your comfort is our priority when receiving inpatient and outpatient services at any of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance facilities. That's why we have invested millions of dollars in new technology, equipment, and renovations over the past several years.

Most recently, Hazleton General Hospital invested close to one million dollars to renovate the 5th floor telemetry unit and to upgrade furniture and equipment throughout the hospital.

The 5th floor telemetry unit at Hazleton General Hospital underwent extensive renovations to enhance the patient experience and purchased new state-of-the-art equipment to help in providing excellent health outcomes for the patients we serve. The specialized staff of the 33-bed telemetry unit cares for patients who require more intensive treatment and monitoring than general medical/surgical patients. On this unit, patients receive cardiac monitoring, to include electrocardiogram (ECG) interpretation, with greater frequency than they would on a normal unit. To assist staff in ensuring patient safety and positive outcomes through informed care management, a new state-of-the-art wireless telemetry system was installed as part of the renovation project.

Other renovations to the 5th floor included:

- Newly painted walls
- New ceiling and floor tiles
- New patient room doors
- Decorative and functional backboards behind each bed
- Updated nurses station
- New sophisticated patient call system

The 5th floor, along with the other patient care floors (all renovated within the last five years), also received the following upgrades:

- New state-of-the-art IV therapy equipment
- New state-of-the-art bedside medication verification systems linked to medication safety
- New privacy curtains in all rooms
- New flat screen televisions for each patient bed
- Patient/caregiver communication boards for each bed

Among the many enhancements made to the 5th floor patient care unit is a new call bell system to better assist patients, improve communication among medical, nursing, and support staff, enhance the quality of patient care and satisfaction, and control noise levels.

New Call Bell System Enhances Patient Care

In comparison to the previous call bell system, the new system not only indicates the room requesting assistance, but also the particular bed, as well as if a patient is in the bathroom or in the shower and if it's an emergency situation. The call bell system is color and sound coded to enhance communication among staff and patients.

- Blue indicates a patient is requesting help from the bed.
- Yellow indicates a patient is requesting help from the bathroom. A call bell device is located in the bathroom and in the shower area.
- Green indicates that a nurse is currently in the room helping the patient.
- Red indicates there is an emergency situation.

For example, a blue light is signaled outside of the doorway and a low-pitched sound ensues when patients ring the call bell from their bed. Not only is the medical and nursing staff able to see and hear that a patient is requesting assistance, but also a message is sent to the main communication center located at the nurses' station. Each nurse is equipped with a call bell device that is clipped on his/her uniform.

The patient call bell light is turned off and a message is sent to the main communication center once a nurse enters the room to care for the patient. This is all part of the nurse finder feature, which increases communication and maximizes efficiency because every nurse wearing the call bell device can be located quickly.

In addition, an intercom system is present in each room, so nursing staff can engage in two-way communication with patients, maximizing time and efficiency.

“The new call bell system helps our staff to meet patient needs faster and more efficiently since we are able to identify and prioritize, which allows us to expedite high-quality care in the best possible way.”

- Lois Hertzog
5th floor nurse
manager

Hazleton General Hospital—meeting the diverse needs of its patients. □



Home Telemonitoring Program



Identifies Issues Before They Become Health Problems

It's a comfort to know that help is right around the corner if ever needed. Hazleton General Home Care is a service of Hazleton General Hospital and part of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance. As the Greater Hazleton area's only hospital-based home health agency, it has the full resources of the hospital at its fingertips.

Registered nurses, physical, occupational, and speech therapists, social workers, and home health aides work closely with patients in their homes to provide unmatched, individualized care for all patients, from newborns to senior citizens and everyone in-between.

This experienced, courteous, and compassionate home health team is vital in helping patients make a smooth transition from the hospital to home or in providing in-home care to avoid a hospital stay. Working with each

patient's healthcare team results in a coordinated effort to help in the recovery process, assist in independent living, and improve quality of life.

“A registered nurse (RN) is on call 24 hours per day, seven days per week in order to best meet all of your home health care needs.”

- Sandra Mumich, RN
Director, Hazleton General
Home Care.



State Representative
Tarah Toohil
116th Legislative District

Recently, in observance of National Home Health Month, State Representative Tarah Toohil participated in a ride-along with Sandra Mumich. The home health ride-along provided State Representative Toohil with a first-hand opportunity to experience home health services in our area and its benefits to the community we serve.

During the ride-along, State Representative Toohil experienced the new Honeywell HomMed Genesis DM telephonic home-based health monitoring system being used on a patient. The Honeywell HomMed Genesis DM telehealth monitor is an effective teaching and monitoring tool for those patients who require education and disease management in the following areas:

- Congestive heart failure (CHF)
- Uncontrolled hypertension
- Post-op cardiac surgery
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Uncontrolled diabetes mellitus
- Any patient at increased risk for readmission to the hospital

Hazleton General Home Care is committed to teaching patients how to be independent in disease management. This innovative system allows patients (or caregivers) to record five key vital signs from the convenience of their own home, including heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen saturation, weight, and blood glucose monitoring for diabetic patients. This quick and easy process securely transmits the data to our home health team. Caregivers are able to identify any health issues quickly so that they can be addressed immediately. This ensures that our home health team can identify a potential health issue before it becomes a problem. For more information, call 570.501.4949. □

TRUE or FALSE

Test Your Knowledge About Stroke

1. **TRUE or FALSE** In the United States, every 45 seconds a person suffers from a stroke?
2. **TRUE or FALSE** A stroke occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery or a blood vessel breaks, interrupting crucial blood flow to an area of the brain.
3. **TRUE or FALSE** A stroke can't be treated.
4. **TRUE or FALSE** A stroke only strikes the elderly.
5. **TRUE or FALSE** A stroke can affect more than a person's speech and mobility.

Hazleton General Hospital was the first Primary Care Stroke Center in Northeast Pennsylvania. The center recently received re-accreditation with superior performance status. For more information about stroke and stroke prevention, contact the GHHA Community Health Library at 570.501.4800, the American Stroke Association at 1.800.4.STROKE, or online at www.strokeassociation.org.

Answers:
1. True 2. True 3. False, a stroke requires emergency treatment. The sooner emergency treatment is sought, the less mental and physical debilitations there could be. 4. False, a stroke can strike at any age. 5. True, it can affect mood, depression levels, memory loss, communication, difficulty in performing daily tasks, muscle tightness, and more.

Quality Care

Recognized by National Organization

HealthGrades—the nation's most trusted, independent source of physician information and hospital quality ratings—recently named Hazleton General Hospital among the **top 5%** in the nation for overall pulmonary services and a recipient of the 2012 HealthGrades Pulmonary Care Excellence Award, and as one of America's top 100 hospitals in pulmonary care.



“Patients today have a wide array of options when it comes to choosing a healthcare provider. At HealthGrades, we are proud to have led the way for empowering patient choice based on objective clinical outcomes and access to actionable quality measures. We commend Hazleton General Hospital for its superior quality and support of consumerism and transparency.”

- Kerry Hicks
HealthGrades
chief executive officer

Hazleton General Hospital wholeheartedly supports efforts to make quality outcomes available to our community. All of this is done to help individuals make informed health decisions to live healthy, independent lives. Our efforts in high-quality care have been recognized by HealthGrades: Recipient of the HealthGrades Pulmonary Care Excellence Award™ in 2011, ranked among the top five percent in the nation for overall pulmonary services in 2012, and a recipient of Patient Safety Award for four consecutive years (2008-2011).

In 2012, Hazleton General Hospital also proudly received 5-Star ratings in the following areas, which means that our clinical performance exceeds expectations:

- **Five-Star Rated for Treatment of Heart Failure in 2012**
- **Five-Star Rated for Overall Pulmonary Services in 2012**
- **Five-Star Rated for Treatment of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease for five Years in a Row (2008-2012)**
- **Five-Star Rated for Treatment of Pneumonia for seven Years in a Row (2006-2012)**
- **Five-Star Rated for Treatment of Sepsis in 2012**
- **Five-Star Rated for Treatment of Respiratory Failure in 2012**





Key findings of the HealthGrades 2011 Healthcare Consumerism and Hospital Quality in America report include:

Patients had, on average, a **73%** lower risk of dying in a 5-star rated hospital compared to a 1-star rated hospital, and a **54%** lower risk of dying in a 5-star rated hospital compared to the national average.

Patients, on average, were **63%** less likely to experience in-hospital complications than patients at 1-star programs, and had a **43%** lower chance of developing an in-hospital complication than the national average.

If all Medicare patients from 2008 through 2010 had been treated at 5-star hospitals, **240,040 lives** could have potentially been saved.

If all Medicare patients from 2008 through 2010 had gone to 5-star hospitals for their procedures, **164,472 in-hospital complications** could have potentially been avoided.

America Dominated by an Unhealthy Culture

As a society, we're hounded about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Weight loss reality TV shows, expensive fitness programs, and promising diet fads have a mainstream influence in our society. It's drilled into us from childhood to a point that we become immune to the fundamental message, yet 33.8 percent of American adults and 17 percent of children struggle with obesity. In fact,

30.5 percent of Pennsylvanians are classified as obese, which reinforces the urgent need to make changes locally.

Long gone is the "first generation" of American obesity: the fascination with fast food, unhealthy choices (high amounts of butter, white flour, shortening, and sugar), daytime physical inactivity, and nighttime indulging. The present-day era is climbing to an entirely unprecedented level, resulting from various dynamic factors that include but are not limited to a lack of nutritional education and poverty; environmental, cultural, behavioral, genetic, hereditary, and psychological factors; a sense of entitlement in modern-day youth; a lack of exercise; and, unfortunately, those who simply choose to ignore the tipping scale.

Obesity is making national headlines not only through intentional advertisements, but also disheartening situations that occur as a result of this epidemic sweeping the nation. Take for example, the media headlines of a Cleveland third grader who, because he weighs more than 200 pounds, was removed from his family and placed into foster care. Extreme—yes. Unwarranted—possibly so, but action such as this makes us stop and think as a society: *how far is our nation willing to go to ensure that preventive measures are taken to protect the health of our youth?*

"At least 40-60 percent of our pediatric patients are overweight or obese," said Jeffrey Kuls, RN, MSN, CRNP, Alliance Medical Group Pediatrics. "As a nation, we really need to work with the parents and have them involved with meal planning and healthier eating habits.

Children should be encouraged to exercise. In many cases, it's a matter of getting the kids and the parents outside for activity together."

Recently, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Georgia, developed a hard-hitting television and billboard campaign called Strong4Life, targeting childhood obesity. While critics suggest that aggressive ads such as these might further stigmatize or ostracize kids with weight problems, the argument could be made that Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Georgia, felt compelled to display such an honest message to increase awareness in their local community.

What would merit such a campaign? They also conducted a survey, which indicated 50 percent of those questioned didn't view childhood obesity as a concern, a troubling finding since statistics support the continued rise of obesity from generation to generation.



“Obesity has become one of the most important public health problems in the United States. Children who are overweight or obese can have significant physical and psychological health issues. Just as with adults, obesity in childhood could result in cardiovascular disease, hypertension, joint disorders, respiratory disorders, and type II diabetes.”

- Marie Clark
Registered Nurse
Hazleton General Hospital

The organization also found 75 percent of parents with obese children didn't view it as a concerning problem, which prompted the zealous advertising campaign to provide a strong awakening to Americans across the nation.

The truth—weight management is a family affair, a fact concurred by many childhood obesity experts. There must be limits and parents must learn to say no for the health and well being of their children. “We offer surgical weight loss options and educational tools at the Northeast Bariatric Center here at Hazleton General Hospital for those who suffer from morbid obesity; however, weight loss surgery ideally is the last possible alternative. Not to mention, most insurances don't cover adolescent weight loss surgery and do we really want our children going through surgery?” said Michael Golden, Chief Nursing Officer. “The key is preventive measures at a young age so there are good habits throughout adulthood.”

There are no easy fixes to addressing the rise of obesity in America, but if we view what we need to do as a checklist then we can experience feelings of accomplishment and success as we achieve a healthier lifestyle. “Family education and building awareness of lifestyle habits are first and foremost. I can tell parents and children to avoid sweetened beverages and fast food but unless there is a multi-disciplinary team effort to educate families about how to make the necessary changes, then the obesity rate will continue to rise,” said Amy Cartwright, registered dietitian with the Northeast Bariatric Center. “Proper nutrition and physical activity are key components to preventing and treating obesity. Families that struggle with obesity should consult with a registered dietitian for healthier eating and cooking habits, a fitness instructor for programs that are available to them, and their family healthcare providers.” Let's take a look at what you as a parent can do to combat childhood obesity. □

What Can Parents Do?



Set a good example: Children are easily influenced. Take care of yourself by eating properly and exercising. This sets a good example for your children to follow.



Get involved: Communication is key. Talk to your kids about obesity and its health, psychological, and emotional effects. Lead by example: practice outdoor activities and participate in health or nutritional education classes.



Healthy choices: If the house is stocked with cookies, candy, chips, and soda, then that's what kids are going to grab. Having fresh fruit, vegetables, yogurt, crackers, nuts, and healthy cereal at home will encourage better eating choices.



Meal planning: Meal planning is made easy through effective communication and creativity. Discuss the meals you'd like to enjoy throughout the week and develop a meal plan, making sure to increase your fresh vegetables and decrease any processed flour such as white breads, pastas, etc. If you're having baked chicken then make a few extra plain pieces. You can dress the chicken up with different toppings and healthy glazes to keep your taste buds interested.



Learn to say no: No one likes to tell their children “No.” Setting a positive example from a young age creates a healthy habit for kids to follow. If they aren't exposed to excessive amounts of junk food, then they are less likely to crave it and you're less likely to have to say “No.”

Making Every Breath Count

Sometimes walking across the room, going up the stairs, or bending over to pick something up can leave you feeling out of breath. Did you know that regular exercise can help you? It can train your body to take in more oxygen and, therefore, improve your breathing, increase your muscle strength, and enhance your overall exercise experience.

It sounds like a relatively “easy” commitment for moderately to highly-active people, but what about those who suffer from a lung disorder? They might find it challenging or borderline impossible to exercise independently, thus missing out on the many health benefits associated with exercising. Instead of discontinuing an exercise routine completely, think about the benefits of monitored exercise.

The Hazleton Health & Wellness Center recently developed a 12-week comprehensive Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program for those who are diagnosed with a chronic pulmonary disorder. The team works with patients in order to achieve optimal pulmonary health through a multi-disciplinary team approach that involves individualized clinical management and health maintenance of patients with chronic respiratory disease—COPD, severe asthma, chest wall disease, cystic fibrosis, bronchiectasis, interstitial lung disease, lung cancer, selected neuromuscular diseases, post-polio syndrome, and perioperative conditions.

The healthcare team includes a board certified internal medicine physician, a pulmonologist, exercise physiologists, respiratory therapists, physical and occupational therapists, nurses, fitness specialists, and nutritionists—all of which provide a variety of comprehensive services to help you breathe better.

Patients are required to have a pulmonary function test, electrocardiogram (EKG/ECG), and a six minute walk test prior

to starting the program. Following a physician's referral, patients in the program undergo an assessment to determine an appropriate and individualized plan, which is based on patient goals, current fitness level, and medical complications/disabilities. Patients experience the benefits of monitored exercise, breathing classes, and educational sessions.

“Most pulmonary rehab patients wear oxygen while exercising. We monitor heart rate, as well as rhythm and oxygen saturation. We gradually increase their exercise time and levels to improve conditioning. Most patients successfully increase their exercise times from six-42 minutes, which is a 600 percent increase. One of our goals is to have patients be able to perform activities of daily living and household tasks without feeling as short of breath. We teach them the techniques to achieve this,” said Joan Carrelli, BSN, Cardiac Diagnostics and Rehabilitation.

Upon completion of the program, patients will have an increased functional capacity, a better understanding of pulmonary disease and medications, a decreased risk for future incidents, and a healthier pulmonary lifestyle that allows them to live life more independently.

Just ask Claire Schafer, an 84-year-old retired teacher from the Hazleton Area School District. “My lung specialist suggested I join a pulmonary rehabilitation program. I called the Alliance and was happy to hear that they offered such a program. I live in the Hazleton area, so it's convenient for me to go to the Hazleton Health & Wellness Center. Everyone was helpful and kind, and it was a very good experience from start to finish,” said Claire. Claire is feeling better since her completion of the program and credits the exercise and breathing techniques for helping her achieve her activities of daily living, such as climbing the stairs.

Please note that insurance coverage varies, so contact your insurance company for more information. Classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays for approximately one hour. For more information about Pulmonary Rehabilitation, call 570.501.4624. □





Low Vision Therapy

The staff at the Hazleton Health & Wellness Center recognizes our high senior population in the community, many of whom suffer from chronic vision problems. Identifying this need in our community, the Hazleton Health & Wellness Center added a Low Vision Therapy Program to its comprehensive list of outpatient services.

Low vision therapy is a treatment program that specializes in helping patients with visual conditions related to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, cataracts, or glaucoma. While these patients possess some functional vision, they suffer from vision impairments that interfere with the appropriate performance of daily tasks such as cooking, reading the newspaper, writing, using the telephone or microwave, dressing, and labeling and matching clothing.

The low vision therapy program is under the direction of a certified low vision rehabilitation therapist who has more than 19 years of experience in the field. Experienced staff work together to offer those patients with uncorrectable vision an opportunity to learn how to achieve maximum function of the vision they do have. The team assesses your personal visual impairment, trains you in the use of helpful adaptive equipment, and educates you about useful techniques to compensate for low vision.

To be eligible for the program, patients must be 18 or older, have a best corrective vision of 20/40 or worse, and receive a referral from a primary care physician, ophthalmologist, or optometrist. The low vision therapy program is covered by Medicare, but patients are encouraged to confirm coverage of this service prior to the service being rendered.

If you would like more information about the Low Vision Therapy Program, call 570.501.6716 or check out our website at www.hazletonhealthandwellness.org. □



Taking Baby Steps

It's a special time for all parents, one of those priceless moments that allow moms and dads to take a mental snapshot of their infant gaining independence. It's a feeling of accomplishment and pride when you witness your child physically develop, whether it's crawling across the floor, gripping the couch or coffee table for a sturdy balance, or taking that first baby step.

Sometimes, however, we become anxious if we feel that our child is lagging behind in any way. It can be difficult to distinguish between children who are simply developing at their own rate or who may have a developmental issue that requires medical attention. Haitham Shahrour, MD, one of the newest pediatricians to join Alliance Medical Group, sheds some light on this topic.

It's standard for children to begin crawling between 5-8 months and walking between 11-16 months. Progression of skills is important. If your baby is a little late when it comes to rolling over and crawling, chances are the child requires a few more weeks or even months to complete the task.

A child's first steps are a common concern for parents as well. Many equate walking with intelligence, a common misconception. Walking is related to a child's temperament and opportunity, not intelligence. In most cases, late walking isn't a concern. Children focus on different skills at different times, so there's a wide range of normal. "A red flag may go up once a child reaches approximately 17-18 months and still isn't walking," said Dr. Shahrour. "This signals to us that something may be wrong and needs to be addressed."

At that point, parents should consult with a pediatrician. Looking at the entire development of a child instead of just one aspect helps pediatricians piece together what might be wrong, if anything at all. Addressing the body as a whole enables healthcare providers to make sound assessments and pinpoint the individual problem(s). This includes developmental, social, fine-motor skills, and even speech functions.

"We start with a history and physical exam to assess muscle strength, normal neurologic functions, and so on. The initial conclusion determines where we go. If a pediatrician finds that a child requires additional help,



then an evaluation with a rehabilitation team might be in order to identify gross motor skills or developmental delay. It's all dependent upon the child's independent needs," said Dr. Shahrour.

"We work together to identify the potential problem and develop a treatment plan that is customized for each child."

- Haitham Shahrour, MD

So remember that babies develop at their own rates but if you have concerns, contact a pediatrician or your primary healthcare provider.

For more information about a baby's growth and development, contact the Alliance Medical Group's pediatric office at 570.501.6400 or visit the "For Parents" section on our website at www.hazletonpediatrics.com.



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Healthy Beginnings for Mom and Baby

Prenatal care is essential to the overall health and well-being of mothers and their newborns. Hazleton General Hospital offers the Healthy Beginnings Plus program to ensure that all mothers receive the special care they need during pregnancy.

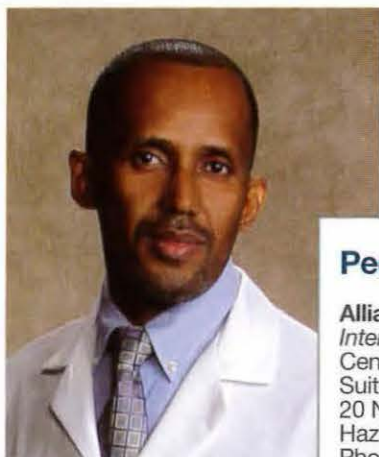
This state-funded program is designed to provide low-income mothers with an opportunity to experience positive prenatal care and is available to pregnant women who are eligible for Medical Assistance. Healthy Beginnings Plus offers high quality prenatal care, regular mother and fetal check-ups, as well as birthing and various support classes. All mothers who participate in the Healthy Beginnings Plus program deliver their babies at Hazleton General Hospital's Family Birthing Center.

The Family Birthing Center is a beautiful, modern, secure maternity unit that offers a variety of accommodations to ensure the comfort, safety, and security of our patients. It consists of three private labor and delivery rooms, as well as nine postpartum suites, which feature private bathrooms and wall-sized wooden armoires with plenty of storage to make your stay as home-like as possible.

Healthy Beginnings Plus relocated its Hazleton office to the first floor of the Center City Medical Complex, 20 North Laurel Street, Hazleton. Hazleton General Hospital provides a second Healthy Beginnings Plus location on Route 309 in Hometown. For more information about this program, call 570.459.0082. □



New Healthcare Providers



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Cardiovascular Disease
Hazleton Health & Wellness Center,
Suite 103
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Hazleton, PA 18202
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Sheila F. Hockman, DO, FACOG

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Obstetrics and Gynecology
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Cynthia Lubinsky, DO

Alliance Medical Group
Family Practice
Medical Office Complex, Suite 203
668 North Church Street
Hazleton, PA 18201
Phone: 570.501.2305

231 Claremont Avenue (Rt. 309)
Hometown (Tamaqua), PA 18252
Phone: 570.225.7211



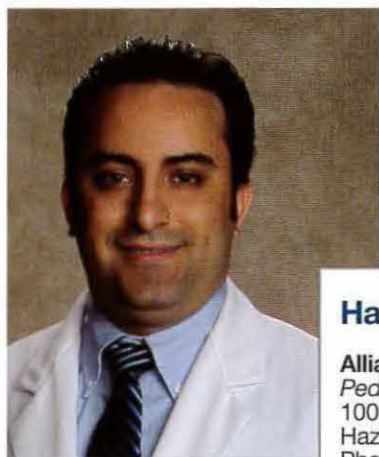
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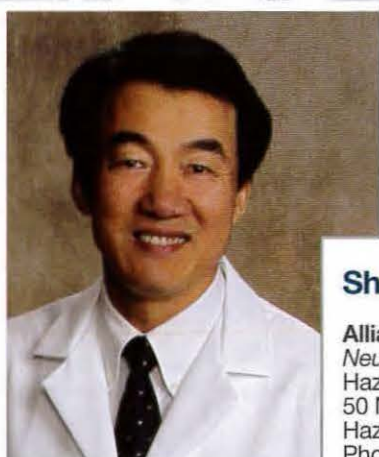
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Our heart is in healthcare.



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Gunderson Rehabilitation Center • **Hazleton General Home Care**
Certified Primary Stroke Center • **Alliance Sleep Center**

Hazleton General Hospital is a nonprofit, independently operated, voluntary regional medical center offering, in association with medical staff, a wide range of health technologies and specialty services. Earnings are devoted exclusively to the continuation and improvement of patient services and facilities, as well as educational and outreach activities. The information in this publication is not intended for the purpose of diagnosing or prescribing. If you have concerns about health issues, contact your personal physician.

Periodically, we send communications to friends and neighbors in our community that describe the healthcare services and the products we offer. If you would prefer not to receive communications like this from our organization, please call 570.501.6204.